

# ON THE "RECEMSIO LACAPENIANA" OF EUNAPIUS' *VITAE SOPHISTARUM*

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**I**N his *Prolegomena*<sup>1</sup> V. Lundström was the first to draw the attention of scholars to the fact that the text of *Vita Libanii* by Eunapius that is preserved separately in several manuscripts, in which it is prefixed to various works of Libanius, differs in many points from the text of the *Vitae Libanii* contained in the archetypus in which Eunapius' whole biographical work, the *Vitae Sophistarum*, has come down to us.<sup>2</sup>

There are of course a few slight textual discrepancies between the various manuscripts containing the *Vita Libanii* in isolation,<sup>3</sup> but there is no doubt that the text preserved in all of them has descended from one common source, the original text of which can easily be reconstructed. Since the text of the version in question is prefixed, in seven manuscripts out of twelve, to the collection of Libanius' letters which is known to have been edited by Georgios Lacapenos in the fourteenth century, Lundström came to the conclusion that Lacapenos himself should be considered its author. The discrepancies between the Lacapenian version and the one preserved in the Laurentianus 86, 7 can be seen in the interlinear edition published by Lundström (*Prolegomena*, pp. 26 ff.) in which the upper line of each couple gives the text of the Laurentianus, and the lower one that established by Lacapenos: a few mistakes that escaped Lundström's attention were corrected by Vollebregt, who published both versions in a duplicate text to which the reader is referred here.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> V. Lundström, *Prolegomena in Eunapii Vitas*: "Skr. utg. af Kgl. Vetensk.-Samf. i Upsala," vi. (1897), 2.

<sup>2</sup> A list of all the manuscripts that are descended from Laur. 86, 7 (the archetypus) is given by Lundström (p. 8) and by J. C. Vollebregt, *Symbola in novam Eunapii Vitarum editionem*, Amsterdam, 1929, pp. 12 f.

<sup>3</sup> These manuscripts are listed by Förster, *Libanii Opera*, i. 1 f. (cf. also Lundström, *Prolegomena*, pp. 21 ff. and Vollebregt, *Symbola*, pp. 12 ff.).

<sup>4</sup> I quote from the Didot edition by Boissonade (page and line).

An investigation of some discrepancies from the text of the Laurentianus that were contained in the Lacapenian version led Lundström to the conclusion that these could not be ascribed to Lacapenos' hand, and that, therefore, the Lacapenian text appeared to be based upon a version different from the one that has come down to us in the Laurentianus. We know from Photius (cod. LXXVII) that there were two versions of Eunapius' *ἱστορίαι* current in ancient times; considering this fact, Lundström maintained that a double version of the *βίος* must have existed as well, and, in particular, that of the second version—otherwise unknown to us—a relic must be recognized in the Lacapenian text of the *βίος Λιβανίου*.

As Kroll rightly says<sup>1</sup> in his review of Lundström's *Prolegomena*, the data upon which Lundström's theory was based do not seem to be convincing: in fact, apart from such slight discrepancies as the presence or the absence of the *ν ἐφελκυστικόν*, “ dass Lakapenos an der Libaniosvita, als er sie herübernahm, einige Abänderungen vornahm, z.B. einen nicht ganz leicht verständlichen Vergleich strich, ein Selbstzitat der historischen Schrift unterdrückte und den Julianos statt *θειότατος* lieber *βασιλεύς* nannte, hat doch nichts Auffälliges”. Kroll is undoubtedly right: all the peculiarities of this kind that are to be noticed in the Lacapenian version can easily be ascribed to the grammarian's hand, without assuming that he had a different version before him.

There is, however, one point which is not clear, namely, the words (496, 49 f.) *τούτω δὲ ὁ ταῦτα γράφων οὐ συνεγένετο. ἄλλοτε ἄλλων ἐμποδισμάτων ἐπηρεία τύχης συμβάντων* which, although extant at the end of the Lacapenian version, are not found to be in the text of the Laurentianus. Lundström saw in these words the proof of the Lacapenian version being independent of the tradition represented by the Laurentianus. Kroll, however, seemed to be rather puzzled by this problem: “ Wie es mit den Schlussworten steht: *τούτω δὲ ὁ ταῦτα γράφων οὐ συνεγένετο. ἄλλοτε ἄλλων ἐμποδισμάτων ἐπηρεία τύχης συμβάντων*, die Lakapenos hat, während sie im Laurentianus

<sup>1</sup> BphW 1898, 932 ff.

fehlen, vermag ich freilich nicht zu sagen; aber wo dringen wir denn in alle Geheimnisse der Ueberlieferung?"

In contrast with Lundström, Vollebregt denies the existence of two versions of the *Vitae* by the hand of Eunapius himself, and, in particular, maintains that the *Vita Libanii* prefixed by the rhetor's *Epistles* was retouched from Eunapius' original text by Lacapenos or, in any case, by some unknown grammarian. Still, according to Vollebregt, the Lacapenian *Vita* is of great importance: he agrees with Lundström that the presence of the words *τούτῳ δὲ κτλ* is a clear proof that the manuscript upon which the grammarian based his text was independent of the Laurentianus which, as we have already observed, does not contain them.<sup>1</sup> But how does the matter really stand, as regards the words in question? Both Lundström and Vollebregt, quoting such passages from Eunapius' *Vitae* as 491, 13 ff. *οὐκ ἔγνω τοῦτον ὁ συγγραφεὺς, πλὴν ὅσα γε διὰ συγγραμμάτων*; 494, 3 f.: *τοῦτον ὁ ταῦτα γράφων, οὐκ ἔγνω, πολὺ προαπελθόντα τῆς ἐπιδημίας*, 494, 11 *τοῦτον ἐγίγνωσκεν ὁ συγγραφεὺς, καὶ κτλ*, etc., content themselves with stating that the passage which we are now examining can be ascribed to nobody but Eunapius himself.

A detailed investigation of the sentence, both in itself and taken in its context, seems to be called for in order to solve the problem.

First of all, every unprejudiced reader will not fail to note that the words in question stand in a certain contrast to the rest of the *Vita*. Eunapius' attitude towards Libanius is rather spiteful; to use Mrs. W. C. Wright's words, he is inclined to disparage Libanius, ignores his triumphal appointment to the Constantinople chair by imperial edict, gives no account of the numerous works of Libanius, with which he must have been familiar, and criticizes the sophist's style so wrongly that, as Mrs. Wright observed, "this makes us hesitate to accept the judgements of Eunapius on sophists whose writings do not survive". Libanius' life was written by Eunapius "nicht ohne Uebelwollen", to quote Förster's words (*RE*, s.v. Libanios,

<sup>1</sup> Vollebregt follows here Förster's opinion: cf. *Libanii opera*, i. 2 f. Cf. W. R. Chalmers, in *Class. Quart.*, 1953, pp. 167 f.

2486). Further evidence for Eunapius' real attitude towards Libanius is to be found, for instance, in the passage where, speaking of the sophist being compelled to leave Constantinople, the biographer “ drückt sich zweideutig aus ” (Förster, 2489) : *διαβολῆς δέ τινος αὐτῷ γενομένης περὶ τὰ μεράκια, ἣν θεμιτὸν οὐκ ἦν ἐμοὶ γράφειν, ἐς μνήμην ἀξιολόγων ἀνέντι τὴν γραφήν, ἐκπεσῶν τῆς Κωνσταντίνου πόλεως κατέσχε τὴν Νικομήδειαν, κακείθεν τῆς φήμης ἐπισπομένης καὶ παραθεούσης αὐτῷ κτλ*: in fact, it is not clear whether or not Eunapius believes in the scandalous *διαβολή*, but in any case he does not miss the opportunity of mentioning it, without too much reticence, yet with obvious relish.<sup>1</sup> In the life of Acacius, Eunapius gives an untrue report concerning the rivalry existing between that sophist and Libanius: he says that Acacius overthrew his rival's supremacy, and that the latter admitted his own defeat, ascribing it to Acacius' unquestionable superiority: but we know that it was Libanius who triumphed over his rival, who left Antioch about 361. Nor does Eunapius fail to report that Libanius had a mistress, adding that her social position was inferior to that of the sophist.

To put it shortly, Eunapius shows no sympathy<sup>2</sup> towards Libanius: therefore such a statement as *ἐπηρεία τύχης*—which would otherwise have been perfectly adequate—seems to be out of place.<sup>3</sup>—The whole sentence gives the impression of having been added by someone who could not understand why Eunapius omitted to mention whether or not he had known the most famous sophist of his time. It is a fact that Eunapius often tells his readers whether he knew the single sophists—and other people as well—whose lives are dealt with in his work: we are told that he knew Maximus (473, 16 ff.), Hilarius the painter

<sup>1</sup> It is worth while noting that there is no other evidence for the charge in question.

<sup>2</sup> The only point at which Eunapius shows any sympathy towards the sophist (but not without failing to call him *δόξης ἐλάττων ἀνὴρ*) is where he mentions the latter's refusal of an important political appointment (496, 40 ff.); this is due to the fact that Libanius maintained *τὸν σοφιστὴν εἶναι μείζονα* than any other title: we know that Eunapius himself “ regarded the title of sophist as the most honourable possible ” (Wright, Loeb edn., p. 320).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Bauer, *Wörterb. z.N.T.*, s.v. *ἐπήρεια*.

(482, 26), Sopolis (494, 24 f.), Diophantus (494, 11 f.). On the other hand, Eunapius tells us that he did not know Epiphanius because the sophist died long before his stay in Athens. It is certainly astonishing to learn that Eunapius did not make the "persönliche Bekanntschaft der grossen Epideiktiker des Ostens, Himerios und Libanios" (Schmid, *RE*, s.v. Eunapius, 1122). As to the former, Eunapius simply says that (494, 35 ff.) οὐκ ἔγνω δὲ αὐτὸν ὁ ταῦτα γράφων · καὶ τοί γε ἦν κατ'ἐκείνους τοὺς χρόνους and gets rid of the sophist with a few hasty lines. Mentioning Himerius at another point, Eunapius speaks of him as Ἰμερίος τις σοφιστῆς (491, 14): in other words, Eunapius almost ignores him as a man and as a teacher. Such a negative attitude can easily be understood if we consider that Himerius was one of the two greatest rivals of Eunapius' teacher, Prohaeresius (the other one being Libanius<sup>1</sup>); that is why Eunapius—whose loyalty to Prohaeresius was absolute—did not feel any personal interest or sympathy towards Himerius, yet did not wish to have anything to do with his teacher's rival, which we may—and perhaps are meant to—infer from the hint καὶ τοί γε ἦν κτλ, and which appears quite natural in consideration not only of Eunapius' character,<sup>2</sup> but also of the fierce spirit of rivalry existing in his times between the various teachers, each of whom exerted his control and influence over his pupils<sup>3</sup> to the absolute exclusion of his colleagues.

What we have noted regarding Himerius holds true for the other great rival of Prohaeresius,<sup>4</sup> Libanius.<sup>5</sup> In fact, it is well

<sup>1</sup> On the rivalry between Prohaeresius and Himerius see Schenkl, *RE*, s.v. Himerios, 1623 ff.

<sup>2</sup> On Eunapius' attitude towards his teachers (first of all Prohaeresius, but also Chrysanthius) see Thomas, *Bull. Acad. Roy. Belg., cl. des lettres*, 1921, pp. 529 ff.

<sup>3</sup> In Mrs. Wright's opinion (Loeb edn. of Eunapius' *Vitae*, p. 333) Eunapius' attitude towards Himerius was due to professional jealousy: this may well be true, but only in part: Eunapius was about thirty years younger than Himerius.

<sup>4</sup> That Eunapius wrote the lives of Libanius and Himerius in a superficial and hasty way did not escape Mrs. Wright's attention (Loeb edn., p. 320). Cf. also F. A. Wright, *Hist. Later Greek Literature*, p. 368.

<sup>5</sup> On the "Gegnerschaft" existing, on the other hand, between Libanius and Himerius see Förster-Münscher, *RE*, s.v. Libanios, 2534.

known that Libanius had replaced Prohaeresius in the heart of the Emperor Julian :<sup>1</sup> it was Libanius that the emperor expected to write the history of his deeds, after the deterioration of relations between himself and Prohaeresius.<sup>2</sup> A clear echo of the rivalry existing between Prohaeresius and Libanius is to be found in Eun. fragm. 76 Boiss.

ὁ δὲ Ἰουλιανὸς ὁ παραβάτης . . . τὸν τῆς Ἀντιοχείας σοφιστὴν, ᾧ Λιβάνιος ὄνομα, διαφερόντως ἐθαύμασεν, τὰ μὲν ἴσως ἐπαινῶν, τὰ δὲ ὅπως λυποίη τὸν μέγαν σοφιστὴν Προαιρέσιον, προτιμῶν ἕτερον.

No wonder, therefore, that Eunapius purposely omitted any reference as to whether he had known Libanius personally or not. He did not think it necessary to state whether or not he had met the sophist : also in this respect he did not deflect from the reservedness and coolness with which he treats him. He simply ignores this detail (as he does with others—of still greater importance—regarding Libanius). But, even if Eunapius had wanted to make such a statement, he would certainly not have used the expressions contained in the sentence which we have been examining. It is just this need to justify the fact, in a vague and imprecise way which raises our suspicion, that betrays the author of the sentence. Eunapius himself would have plainly stated—as he did with Himerius—that he did not make the acquaintance of Libanius. The alleged reasons for Eunapius not making the acquaintance of Libanius are, as we have just observed, suspiciously vague : we cannot help feeling that they were added by someone wishing to eliminate

<sup>1</sup> On Julian's relations to Prohaeresius and Libanius, see Christ-Schmid-Stählin, *Gesch. griech. Liter.*, II<sup>6</sup>, 2, pp. 986 and 1023. There is no sure evidence, however, for Prohaeresius being invited to court by Julianus, as Bidez maintains (*L'Empereur Julien, Œuvres complètes*, tome I, 2ième partie, p. 106).

<sup>2</sup> This deterioration is certainly to be ascribed to Julian's attitude towards the Christians. Mrs. Wright (*op. cit.* p. 330) says that “ there was a certain coolness between the Emperor Julian and Prohaeresius, apart from the incident of the exemption, for the sophist resented the Emperor's admiration of Libanius ”. No doubt, however, that the main reason for the cooling of Prohaeresius' attitude towards the Emperor was caused by the latter's anti-Christian policy. The fact that Julianus exempted Prohaeresius alone from the prohibition to teach proves how greatly the emperor esteemed the sophist, but Prohaeresius could not approve of Julianus' actions against his religion.

—by a somewhat autoschediastic remedy—what seemed to him an inexplicable omission. Libanius was contemporary with Eunapius, and it was difficult to understand why the latter had omitted any indication as to whether or not he had known the greatest sophist of his own times.

To sum up, the words in question seem to be, in all probability, an addition to Eunapius' text. There is also another fact pointing to the same conclusion: as Vollebregt rightly noted, Eunapius, when using *οὗτος* at the beginning of a sentence, never attaches *δέ* to the pronoun; he is quite consistent in this matter of style, as the passages quoted by Vollebregt (*Symb.* p. 12) have easily proved. Vollebregt himself is right in denouncing *δέ* as contrasting with Eunapius' usage: but he is wrong in simply deleting it, without trying to explain its presence in the text, or to draw any conclusion from it. Both elements, therefore, pertaining to contents and usage, point to the sentence in question being not due to Eunapius' hand.<sup>1</sup> By whom was it written? If we consider how Lacapenus proceeded in altering Eunapius' text—which can clearly be seen from Vollebregt's examination of the two versions (*Symbola*, pp. 14 ff.)—the reply is obvious. He handled the *Vita* very freely, altering or deleting single words, groups of words and whole sentences: therefore we do not see why he should not have attached to the Epilogue by Eunapius the short addition—very cautious and vague, but, at the same time, apt to obviate Eunapius' silence, which seemed inexplicable to him, an admirer of Libanius. Of course, noticing the fact that Eunapius never mentions his meeting Libanius, Lacapenus preferred to justify this silence by a negative—otherwise extremely elusive—statement, instead of merely adding that the two men had known each other. The part of

<sup>1</sup> Having already noted that the presence of *δέ* betrays a hand other than that of Eunapius, and that the elusiveness of the statement *ἄλλοτε ἄλλων κτλ.* leads us to the same conclusion, what remains to be examined, in the sentence in question, are the words *ὁ ταῦτα γράφων κτλ.* As we have already seen, it is a formula that Eunapius uses at every step, when alluding to himself: this fact convinced Lundström and other critics that the sentence must be by the hand of Eunapius, but the reverse is not less valid: such a constant feature could hardly escape the attention of any reader, let alone Lacapenus', who used it as a kind of *σφραγίς* for his insertion.

the Vita to which this addition could most easily be attached was obviously the epilogue: Eunapius had ended the Vita Libanii with a hint at his death, as he often does.

From what we have been noting so far we may conclude that Lacapenos' text does not stand in isolation, representing a tradition independent of the Laurentianus and otherwise unknown to us, but, being descended from the common archetypus, is of no value as far as recensio is concerned.

By way of an appendix, a few lines on one or other variants contained in the Lacapenian version. When Lacapenos' text is right, in contrast to that of the Laurentianus, Vollebregt ascribes the right readings (which are listed on p. 46 of *Symbola*) partly to Lacapenos' hand, and partly to the Vorlage that he had before him.

As Kroll noted (*loc. cit.*), it is not difficult to see that all the right readings in question can be considered to have been restored by Lacapenos' conjectures; this is the case in 495, 15 f.: *πρὸς τὸν ἀρχαῖον ἐξεβιάζετο τύπον [ἐξεβιβάζετο. Laur.* The reading *ἐξεβιάζετο* was restored by Lacapenos and, independently, by Coray and by Wyttenbach: it is an obvious correction. In 496, 18 f.: *οἱ μὲν οὖν Ἀττικοὶ μυκτῆρα καὶ ἀστεῖσμον αὐτὸ καλοῦσιν] ἀ|||λισμὸν. Laur.* Lacapenos' restoration is obvious: such words as *μυκτῆρ* and *ἀστεῖσμός* were well known to the grammarian that he was. Another successful restoration by Lacapenos is *οὕτως* for *οὗτος* (496, 28): cf. Vollebregt, p. 42 f., and Förster, *Libanii Opera*, I, p. 3. A convincing integration by Lacapenos is in 495, 49 f.: *καὶ τοσοῦτος ἦν ἐς τὴν πλάσιν . . . ὥστε ὁ μὲν <πολύπους> λῆρος ἠλέγχετο.* It is evident that, after *ὁ μὲν*, a word was missing—which is confirmed, for us, by the fact that after *μὲν* the scribe of the archetypus began a fresh line (in such cases he often omits words, as was shown by Vollebregt): Lacapenos added *πολύπους*, the animal whose ability to imitate and adapt itself was proverbial amongst the Greeks. Other integrations by Lacapenos reflect the grammarian's tendency to standardize the text: such additions as 495, 1 f. *Ἀντιόχεια . . . τῆς . . . Συρίας πρώτη <τῶν> πόλεων* and 495, 8 ff. *ἐν τῷ πλήθει τῶν ὁμιλητῶν καὶ <τῷ> μεγέθει τῆς δόξης* are supported by the fact



that Eunapius' usage confirms them ; as for <τὰ> εἰκότα in 495, 21 ff. *Λιβάνιος . . . προσαρτῶν ἑαυτὸν . . . ἡγεμόσιν ἀρίστοις . . . ἀπήλαυσε τῆς ὁδοῦ τὰ εἰκότα* the fact that the scribe began a fresh line after ὁδοῦ does not fully confirm the legitimacy of Lacapenos' integration : Eunapius is not unlikely to have used the less emphatic form *τῆς ὁδοῦ εἰκότα*, meaning that (I quote Vollebregt's translation) "Libanius carpsit ex hac via tales fructus, quales rationi consentaneum erat expectari", and not that he "carpsit ex hac via eos fructus, quos rationi consentaneum erat expectari".

And now two alterations of the text by Lacapenos, which are accepted by Vollebregt (he believes that the grammarian drew them from his Vorlage) but which are, in reality, not convincing :

496, 13 ff. *καὶ χάριτός γε αὐτῷ καὶ κωμικῆς βωμολοχίας καταπέπλησται τὰ συγγράμματα, κτλ.*

Lacapenos changed *καταπέπλησται* to *ἀναπέπλησται* because he took the sentence *καὶ χάριτος κτλ.* to be a negative criticism of Eunapius' style : it is, therefore, an arbitrary alteration. 496, 20 ff. : *ὁ δὲ ὥσπερ κορυφὴν παιδείας τοῦτο ἐπετήδευσεν, ἐκ τῆς ἀρχαίας κωμωδίας ὄλος εἰς τὸ ἀπαγγέλλειν εἰλκυσμένος καὶ τοῦ κατὰ θύραν τερπνοῦ καὶ γοητεύοντος τὴν ἀκοὴν γενόμενος] γινόμενος. Laur.*

Lacapenos' correction of *γινόμενος* to *γενόμενος* has been accepted by all the critics, Vollebregt included. The latter observes a.l. : "contextusaoristi participium postulat, quod recensio Lacapeniana praebet". In reality, *γινόμενος* is a form typical of Eunapius' language (cf. Vollebregt, p. 39), and we should not be so hasty to correct it : in the context in question it can easily be recognized to be a partic. praes. de conatu.<sup>1</sup> Eunapius, in fact, implies that Libanius did not always succeed in attaining the effects of style at which he was aiming.

<sup>1</sup> As Stahl rightly observes, "am ausgedehntesten findet sich der Gebrauch de conatu beim Participium des Präsens" (*Krit.-Hist. Synt.*, p. 149).